

How To Pay Your Child Support



If the court ordered you to pay child support by wage assignment, DOR will tell your employer to withhold the appropriate amount from your paycheck and forward it to DOR within three days of your payday. We will record any support payment your employer sends and forward the payment to the custodial parent.

Please Note: If you are ordered to pay child support by wage assignment, it may take a few weeks before your employer receives your information from DOR. **Until your employer begins deducting your child support, you are required to make child support payments directly to DOR.**

You must use the attached payment identification stubs to make sure you receive credit for your child support payments. Submit a stub with each payment and continue to use the stubs until you see the appropriate amount of child support being withheld from your pay or until DOR sends you a bill. If you have any questions, call:

1-800-332-2733

If you have not been ordered to pay child support by wage assignment, you must send in your first payments with the attached payment identification stubs. DOR will begin billing you about three weeks from the date you went to court. Your bill will include a payment stub that you submit with your check or money order. Make checks payable to:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Mail payment stubs and checks to:

**Department of Revenue
Child Support Enforcement Division
P.O. Box 55144
Boston, MA 02205-5144**

If the custodial parent is receiving public assistance, your child support payment will be sent to the Department of Transitional Assistance to reimburse the state for payments made to the custodial parent to support your child. If the court ordered you to provide health care coverage for your child, DOR will send your employer a notice to enroll your children in your insurance plan.

How to Send Your Payments



1. DO NOT SEND CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS DIRECTLY TO THE CUSTODIAL PARENT. If you pay the custodial parent instead of DOR, there will be no record of your payment and DOR will assume you did not pay and will take enforcement actions to collect that amount.

2. DO NOT SEND CASH. Make your child support payments by check or money order.

3. Make your check or money order payable to:
COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

4. Print your SOCIAL SECURITY number on your check or money order so that you receive proper credit for your payment.

5. PRINT CLEARLY on the payment stubs

6. Mail payment stubs and checks to:

**Department of Revenue
Child Support Enforcement Division
P.O. Box 55144
Boston, MA 02205-5144**

7. Keep careful records. Keep your cancelled check or copy of your money order as your receipt. If you and DOR ever disagree about your payment history, you must produce the receipts as proof of payment.

Remember, until you receive your first child support bill from DOR or until your employer starts deducting child support from your paycheck, you must follow the procedures above to make your payments. Otherwise, DOR may have no record of your payments and enforcement actions may be taken.

Payment Schedules



If support is deducted from your wages, the employer must send payment to DOR within 3 business days.

If you have a weekly order, the number of payments you owe each month is equal to the number of Fridays in the month. If you are paid every 2 weeks, it may appear you are behind in 5 week months because with 2 pay periods, you are submitting only 4 weeks of support. As long as you continue to make regular payments, the week will be made up the following pay period.

Changes



You must notify DOR immediately if:

- ✓ Your address or phone number changes;
- ✓ You change employers;
- ✓ Your employer's address or phone number changes;
- ✓ You change your driver's license number;
- ✓ You change your Social Security number; or
- ✓ You change your name.

To report changes please fax us at **617-887-7540**, email us at **csegen@dor.state.ma.us** or call us at **1-800-332-2733**.

When DOR takes any action on your child support case, including a court hearing to enforce or modify your child support order, DOR is required to send notice to you at the address in our records. If you do not provide us with a current address, you may not receive notices about your case, which may result in your losing your rights to contest any action we take to collect your child support.

What Happens If You Can't Pay Your Child Support?



Only the court can change or modify the amount of your child support order. Failure to pay child support on time and in full is a violation of the court order.

Either parent may request a modification of the child support order if:

- ✓ Either parent's income changes;
- ✓ The child's custody changes; or
- ✓ Either parent's available health care coverage changes.

You can ask DOR to review your case to see if a modification might be appropriate.

DOR will use the Massachusetts Child Support Guidelines in its review. The Guidelines consider several factors, including both parents' income and ability to earn income, the number of children involved and their ages, and the cost of health care coverage for the children.

Unless the court makes a change to the amount ordered, you must continue to pay the amount indicated on your existing child support order.

You can review estimated changes to your child support order by using the automated Guidelines Worksheet, available on our website:

www.mass.gov/dor

Annual Statements and Notices



If you owe past-due support, DOR will send you an annual statement of your debt and the steps that may be taken to collect the debt. If DOR takes action to enforce your child support debt, we will mail notice to you at the address in our records. That's why it's important, and required by law, that you notify us of any address changes.

Interest and Penalties



DOR imposes 1% interest and .5% penalties on all past-due child support monthly. Any interest collected is paid according to whom the debt is owed. DOR retains the penalties collected.

You can avoid interest and penalties by paying your child support on time and in full.

DOR will consider waiving interest and penalties owed to the Commonwealth if you pay the outstanding principal balance in full. For details on paying your balance, call **1-800-332-2733**.

Enforcing a Child Support Order

DOR uses many enforcement methods if you do not pay your child support. DOR is authorized by federal and state law to collect past-due child support without going to court. DOR may use one or more of the following methods to collect your past-due child support:

- ✓ **Increase the amount withheld from your paycheck by 25%.**
- ✓ **Place a lien on your real estate or personal property.**
- ✓ **Seize your financial assets.**
- ✓ **Suspend your business, trade, professional or driver's license or your motor vehicle registration.**
- ✓ **Refer your case to the U.S. Department of State for denial of your passport.**
- ✓ **Seize your car, vacation home, boat, lottery winnings, funds from bank accounts and any of your business or personal property.**
- ✓ **Intercept your state and federal tax refunds, insurance claims, Worker's Compensation or Unemployment Compensation payments.**

- ✓ **Cloud your credit by referring your debt to credit reporting agencies.**
- ✓ **Seek civil contempt of court. The court may order you to be incarcerated until you pay your child support debt or you may be ordered by the court to participate in a seek work program.**
- ✓ **Refer your case for prosecution of criminal nonsupport for failure to pay child support. The court may fine you up to \$10,000 or order you to be incarcerated for up to five years.**

You can avoid all enforcement actions if you pay your child support on time and in full.

Your rights with your employer:



You may not be:

- ✓ Fired;
- ✓ Demoted;
- ✓ Penalized;
- ✓ Suspended; or
- ✓ Charged more than \$1.00 per pay period by your employer because you pay child support by wage assignment.

Your employer is permitted to deduct up to 65% of your disposable earnings for child support, or 55% if you are supporting a spouse or other children in your household.

Administrative Review



You can use the Administrative Review process to dispute an enforcement action DOR has taken. DOR will conduct an Administrative Review only if you provide us with copies of documents and records that support your claim.

Custody and Visitation



Custody and visitation issues are not handled by DOR. Whether or not you have parenting time with the child, you are required by the court to make your child support payments on time and in full. DOR staff and attorneys are not authorized to provide assistance to either parent with these issues. Contact your attorney or the Probate Court if you need help with access and visitation.

Other Considerations



DOR attorneys represent the Department of Revenue and do not represent either parent. Any violation of tax or welfare laws which comes to the attention of DOR, including its attorneys, is not protected from disclosure and may be reported for investigation and prosecution.

DOR Customer Service



If you have questions about child support services please contact:

Customer Service Bureau
1-800-332-2733
(Toll Free in U.S. and Puerto Rico)
(1-800-255-5587 for the hearing impaired)
Monday – Friday
8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Our telephone automated voice response system (VRS) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with information on services and updates on your case, including recent payments and account status. To avoid busy signals, call after 5:00 P.M.

For more information about our services, to access your case information online, or to use any of our various online services, visit our website at:

www.mass.gov/dor

Information for Parents Who Pay Child Support

Our mission is to protect the economic well-being of children by enforcing the financial responsibilities of parenthood.

Raising a child is a big responsibility. Children require lots of love, care and attention—they need the emotional and financial support of both parents. Child support is a way for parents to share the financial responsibilities for their child even when they do not live together.

The Child Support Enforcement Division of the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR) works to ensure that families receive child support payments on time and in full. If you are ordered by the court to pay child support, you are the **noncustodial parent** and you should read the following information carefully and keep it for reference.

Massachusetts
Department of Revenue
Child Support Enforcement Division

